

Tarboro's eight-acre Town Common, established by the Colonial Legislature in 1760, is unique. Preserved here for posterity is an ancient cotton press—one operated by mule power. At the time when cotton was king, both as a main crop and in the beginning of the state's giant textile industry, presses of this type were indispensable.



The first cotton mill was established before 1816 near Lincolnton. It was the Schenck-Warlick Mill (above) and no longer stands, but the site is identified by a historical marker on N. C. Highway 27.

The second cotton mill was built in 1818 near Rocky Mount. It was burned by Federal troops in 1863 but rebuilt and is now part of the Rocky Mount Mills on N. C. Highway 43.

Tobacco was grown by Indians before the day of recorded history. It was probably the first commodity export. Sir Walter Raleigh's explorers took some back to England from Roanoke Island in the 1580's. The State is now the world's largest tobacco producer and tobacco manufacturing is its second largest industry. The flue-cured process was discovered in Caswell County in 1857 by the brothers Eli and Elisha Slade. A historical marker is at the place, about 6 miles north of Yoncyville on N. C. Highway 86. The cigarette machine was invented in 1884. Free guided tours are open to visitors in the great factories in Winston-Salem, Durham, Greensboro and Reidsville.



Water-powered mills and handcraft shops were forerunners of North Carolina's great 20th Century industries. Food and feed manufacture took place in mills like the one pictured, which is now operated as a tourist attraction near Franklin. Furniture making, in which North Carolina now leads the nation, had its beginning as a handcraft such as may still be seen in mountains and other places.

